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ABSTRACT

This booklet consists of ther proceedings of a day conference at the Royal Commonwealth Society to explore the subject of crime prevention in relation to children in school. It is divided into several sections which speak to the following: (1) report summary of comments made by the various participants; (2) how teachers can help to combat crime; (3) crime prevention--the contribution of the school; (4) children at risk in school--a police view (juvenile crime statistics and how the police work with schools to combat delinquency); (5) schools and welfare agencies (problems of effective cooperation and suggestions as to how they can work harmonicusly). (PFS)

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NACRO

Crime Prevention Conference

Children At Risk In School

Anne Jones
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50p

Children At Risk In School

Proceedings of a day conference held on Wednesday 5 February 1975 at the Royal Commonwealth Society.

NACRO
FOR CARE OF OFFENDERS AND THE PREVENTION OF CRIME

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The Prevention of Crime

As taxpayers we may be concerned about the cost of the penal system, as victims or offenders we may express concern about its apparent injustice, the professional prison or probation officer may be saddened by the system's lack of success. It would indeed be hard to find many who would express satisfaction with this country's penal system. But if we fail to agree remedies few would dispute the fact that the penal system is, time and time again, presented with seemingly inevitable chains of events and sets of circumstances leading to an individual's confrontation with the law. On reading probation officers' reports or an account of a case in the press, how often do we ask what could have been done to prevent this situation arising?

NACRO has traditionally been concerned with ex-prisoners, many of whom represent the failures of the present system. Above all this awareness has encouraged NACRO to pay greater attention to the prevention of crime.

The six conferences recorded in this and the other pamphlets represent NACRO's first major effort in this direction. We have selected six professional groups: architects and town planners, journalists and broadcasters, teachers, housing managers, medics and health visitors, and those responsible for the provision of leisure facilities. Our aim has been to explore the opportunities for the prevention of crime within these professional groups, each of whom plays a major part in shaping the environment and influencing the lives of the citizens of both today and tomorrow. With the help of the respective professional bodies in each field we invited representatives of each profession to a day conference. In addition every conference was attended by members of all those concerned with the treatment of offenders and offenders themselves.

Our hope is not only that the conferences themselves will inspire further thought about the opportunities and responsibilities of each group for the prevention of crime, but that further action and research will follow. There are already encouraging signs that this is happening. But neither ideas nor action need be limited to those who attended the conferences. NACRO welcomes any initiative that might be taken by those reading these pamphlets.

Our thanks are due to the many individuals and organisations who have contributed to these conferences. In particular NACRO is grateful to the members of the conferences' Steering Group, to Mr Mark Carlisle, their chairman, to members of the Link Group who attended every event and drew the series together, and to the Home Office whose generous grant from the Voluntary Social Service Fund financed the conferences.

March 1975

Nicholas Hinton
Director

Conference Report
by Gavin Scott

The teachers who gathered with Education Welfare Officers, policemen, social workers, administrators and others at the NACRO conference on children at risk, had a brief not to pass the buck about responsibility for the rising rate of juvenile crime, and in general they stuck to that brief. They took a fairly critical look at most aspects of their profession and came to a number of general conclusions on the action it should be taking to cut down the number of children who get into trouble, and to help those already in it. It might have been hoped that the conference would produce more specific techniques which teachers could use: but though there were a number of good ideas, the main conclusion was that schools should know more about what other schools are doing, and what other agencies are doing within their area. There was a recognition that the effort for risk children needs to be properly concerted, and one of the main needs to achieve this is good communication.

Logically, the first question is "What puts children 'at risk'?", and there was some discussion of this. During the first opportunity for questions after the morning speakers had finished, a conference member from a college of education in Leicester reminded the rest that two thirds of the boys appearing in court for the first time come from intact families without serious problems, and only 10 per cent come from families which did have real difficulties. It is true, he said, that most persistent offenders do come from this 10 per cent, but what teachers should remember was that a large amount of juvenile crime cannot be attributed simply to family background.

During discussions one of the link-group looked at this from a different angle. He considered his family pretty normal, he said, and it certainly wasn't deprived. Yet he and his wife could sense a feeling of boredom growing in their teenage daughter, and they were worried. Could the fact that so much juvenile delinquency originates from normal families be an indictment of the normal family?

Another speaker put the blame on the 'normal' environment for urban children. It is too heavily used and carefully planned to allow scope for normal childish energies, he said. The child who smashes a bush in the country probably goes unnoticed. On a housing estate he becomes a vandal.

There was general agreement that the children at greatest risk are the materially and emotionally deprived. There was the particular mention of one-parent families and children who had no father or father-figure. Some people asked whether for some children the nature of schools themselves might create a risk.

"What about RSLA children who have lost all faith in the system?" asked one teacher. Another pointed out that there are a certain number of children whom she described as the "under-equipped". These are the ones who always turn up without a pencil, or with the wrong books, or without gym-clothing: for whom the whole school day is a series of explosive collisions with those in authority, nervously exhausting for both sides and producing a steady erosion of self-worth for the child.

A head teacher, raising a point which frequently came up, noted the amount of time that the few trouble-makers take up, and instanced the case of one girl who had been in his office twice in the previous 48 hours for smoking. Peter Newell, of the White Lion Street Free School, replying to a similar point in his discussion group, asked whether the average school did not have a considerably heavier burden of rules than it needed: and possibly many more than its risk pupils could reasonably be expected to carry?

It was also remarked that schools which failed to teach children to read properly were putting them at risk. Not only were their job prospects blighted, but during their school career they were likely to be bored and apathetic. It was children like these who truanted.

Discussion on truanting was limited: in a number of groups people said that, certainly, it was linked with juvenile crime because when children truanted from school they found themselves with little to do: but there did not seem to be much that could be done to stop it without major increases in staffing and a boost to the education welfare service. Some people, however, felt that if each teacher took a register when a new class arrived, it would reduce the number who register at the beginning of the day and then leave.

Despite the fact that Lady Plowden had said the size of schools was something that was outside the scope of discussion, it was a topic which came up again and again. In big schools which were also anonymous places for most children, not only was it hard to catch children who truanted – it was almost impossible to create an atmosphere in which they wanted to stay.

Finally, on the causative side, there was remark on the pervasiveness of violence and militant action in the media and the pervasiveness of the media, especially in children's lives.

How can teachers best help children at risk, whatever the cause? There was agreement that schools are ideal agencies for screening and identification, and that the earlier it was done the better – possibly as early as playschool and nursery school. There were two problems. The first was that teachers do not usually know how to diagnose the condition 'at risk of becoming a juvenile delinquent'. They should be trained, said some; given guidance and encouragement (others) and others still said that every school should have someone who is trained to advise teachers and make sure the screening is done.

The second problem was that some participants feared screening would mean labelling. Even if this was not overt, teachers' expectations were subtly altered when told that one pupil could be a troublemaker.

Others pointed out that teachers make their own rough and ready assessments of children anyway: and that teachers gossip about children in the staffroom. Children get labelled by the nature of things and schools should at least try to make sure they are the right labels and that they bear all the relevant facts. One junior school which made a point of sending over thorough record cards to the secondary school to which its children went, also made a point of not doing so until several weeks into their first term. Thus the teachers had a chance to form some sort of relationship with their new pupils before being exposed to previous judgements.

The general point that schools should make more thorough records of their pupils and that teachers should be encouraged to make better use of these

documents, was widely endorsed.

Most of the discussion about what schools could do to reduce the number of children at risk was about how schools could change their methods of operation. It was generally agreed that when a teacher discovers that a child is in difficulties or causing trouble, the first approach should be intensive attention in his own normal class for as long as possible.

He should not only be enabled to cope with schoolwork but also be made to feel that the system is working for him and not against him: and that it values him.

If this approach does not work inside the class, most people felt that a few weeks in a withdrawal group within the school was the next best thing. There was little talk about special units off school sites which a number of authorities are setting up for difficult pupils, although one speaker at a plenary session said the Secretary of State for Education should have the power to order a certain category of pupil to a special type of school: filling in effect, the gap in magistrates' powers of committal left by the 1969 Children and Young Persons Act.

In addition to intensive teaching a lot of people said how useful counselling can be in helping risk children deal with the pressures they face. Several teachers said at the end of the day that as a result of the conference they would push to have a full-time counsellor installed in their school. Some felt this should apply to junior schools too, and one teacher said that if there was a shortage of manpower or money older secondary school children could be used to do the job in primary schools.

Lady Plowden encouraged teachers to look at the operations of schools as whole units when she asked at the first plenary session how they could be made as rewarding as crime for children.

Many people said that the curriculum had to be changed. Andrew Mann, of the Childrens' Rights Workshop, said that the first step was to ask children what they wanted, instead of just listening to the professionals. Others said it must be widened and 'made more relevant'. Usually this was linked to making it 'more community oriented'.

"The teacher has got to be a social critic as well as a social defender" said Dr Eric Midwinter. "He has got to lead children in an open exploration of environmental problems."

Allen Edwards, a deputy head from Coventry, felt that teachers should have a chance to work in the community in other roles. One group threw up the more limited idea that each school should have someone who is the 'expert' on relations with the surrounding community.

What schools had to give young people was a sense of community, said Mrs H. J. Johnstone, headmistress of a Stoke Newington primary school, because it was just this that juvenile delinquents lacked. Children should get out into their communities more, during school hours.

People in one group remarked that teachers could not expect to get to know the community, or to create a concept of it in their pupils, if they themselves were transients.

Too many teachers came into this category, they said. Local authorities should try and make sure they got housing near their school so that they had a chance to put down roots, and salary scales should reward long service at a particular school instead of opportunistic perambulation.

On the same topic there was wide agreement that "parents must be more involved", and equally wide agreement that this is often very hard to do. Dr Midwinter assured them that the experience of the Educational Priority Areas had produced many "sheer PR" techniques for involving parents. One head said the answer was to get parents, teacher and children working together on extra-curricular projects. One group broadened this point and said that what generally happened was that parents of difficult children felt that they were at loggerheads with the school, and the feeling simply exacerbated the child's difficulties. What teachers should be doing is giving parents confidence in themselves and a feeling that they and the professionals are working together on the problem. More home-school visitors, said many people, were essential.

The idea about encouraging teachers to stay in one area for some time led to talk about the value of allowing a child to get to know a teacher over a number of years. If children learn to accept authority from a teacher when they are young, one person said, there is more chance of them continuing to accept that authority when they reach adolescence if they are still dealing with the same teacher. Perhaps some changes need to be made in a system which presently ensures that the early teacher has ususlly long-since disappeared when he or she is most needed.

What sort of relationships should teachers have with children? Some of the non-teachers said that many teachers did not have enough respect, or affection for their pupils. On teacher who frequently dealt with juvenile delinquents remarked how they "thrived on an atmosphere of discipline and love", and a number of others said that children who had got into trouble seemed to miss clear definitions of boundaries in their relations with teachers. Teachers remarked that the numerical pressures of the normal classroom usually meant that children who especially needed to form a relationship with them simply could not, and it was here that withdrawal groups were of such value. A number of people noted the fact that the teacher was sometimes the only adult a child in trouble could relate or turn to.

But too many teachers had the "doing things for them" attitude, and should give young people more scope for their own initiative, said the critics.

Other points that teachers made about themselves: they should get more training on how to recognise, understand and deal with disruptive and potentially criminal children. Probationers should get more support, because not only do they lack this training, they also lack experience. One of the best ways to help them, some said, was to have tutors attached to a number of probationers, who could take out the difficult children into temporary withdrawal groups before they got too much. People should recognise the truth of what Mrs Anne Jones had said during the conference: that what teachers should concentrate on doing was teaching, and not social work. And they should also realise the increasing amount of time which difficult children were taking up, and be prepared to pay for more teachers per pupil.

The fact that troublemakers forced teachers to divert attention away from the law-abiding majority was a sore point, and some groups tackled it by looking at the way school orgainsation could be made more efficient and teacher-hours used more economically. "Schools lack proper management" said a number of people, and went on to lament the fact that teachers and heads do not get enough administrative and organisational training. Many

people felt better management could help make smaller groups of pupils possible even without many more staff. Others felt that what schools needed were more auxiliary staff who could allow teachers to do the job they were meant to do.

Communications had to be improved, said some. Information about problem children and others did not move about properly within schools. This did not only apply to records. In one local authority a survey had shown that teachers were not getting the information they needed to give proper pastoral care because there were not enough telephone extensions. Whenever a parent rang the school to discuss his or her child with the teacher, the head always had to take the call because the teacher could not be taken all the way from his classroom to the head office. The system was failing because no-one had thought out the simple mechanics of information-processing.

There was a lot of talk about the relations between the schools and the various services which also affect children at risk. Education Welfare Officers made pleas for their own service to be given a better deal. One said that if all schools used the service as thoroughly as some do, its problems of undermanning would quickly become apparent. Another said that whereas some years ago he had been in charge of the welfare of 2,000 children, he was now responsible for 5,000, with the same number of officers. There were complaints that Education Welfare Officers did not have enough access to head teachers, in many schools, and demands that officers be consulted more in dealing with children at risk.

Social workers, on the other hand, sometimes found themselves on the defensive, and there were a number of them who said they felt as though they were in an enemy camp. They did not seem to care, said teachers, whether children actually came to school regularly or not. They did not place enough value on what the school was doing. There had got to be more co-ordination between the services.

Many of the teachers felt this could best be achieved by making the school the centre of activities "because it deals with the whole child". Others felt social services should have "someone to nip over to the school whenever they are needed". One person spoke of successful experiments in Lancashire with giving a school its own social worker; the social workers had been able to give prolonged and regular attention to children at risk which they could not give when they only visited them and the schools which had had their own social worker had produced fewer delinquents than those without.

Most groups who talked about this emphasised that if schools and social services are going to work together the people concerned must know each other personally: there must be a system so that messages go to the right person, but if the system is to operate effectively both parties must be able to put a face to a name. Someone remarked in this context that we should not forget the value of wine and cheese.

There should also be a properly organised system for case-conferences.

Both groups felt that the question of confidentiality unnecessarily complicated the issue of co-ordinating social services and schools. "Confidentiality should be recognised simply as the need to confine information to the relevant agencies" summed up one head.

There were also calls for more joint training of social workers and teachers

so that they had more assumptions and skills in common.

Better relations between schools and police came up occasionally, but there was little mutual recrimination. Chris Dean, of Holland Park School, said the relations between his pupils and local police had been greatly improved by getting the policemen into the classroom in small groups for straight talking with a basis of some controversial introductory notes. He said that too often the policeman will come in and give a formal lecture which does nothing more than re-inforce stereotypes. If schools can make sure that children and police know each other as people, a lot of children will be so much the less at risk.

Michael Powers' speech on research into differing rates of delinquency between schools with similar intake produced a number of queries on what had been found out about the reasons for such differences: and the answer that research into this question had been discouraged by at least one local education authority. There should be more research into this, said some.

This led to the point that many of the participants had heard some good ideas at the conference, but felt there should be some more effective way of passing on 'useful tips'. They had often been surprised at hearing of some institution or development in their own locality of which they had been completely ignorant, and some suggested that a magazine be set up. Others disagreed. There are already too many magazines, they said. What teachers and NACRO should do was to make sure that when they did hear of some useful measure it was adequately publicised through all the existing journals. The same concern for effective communications which schools should exhibit should also be manifest in the world of education as a whole.

Crime and the Educative Community
by Eric Midwinter

One of the ironies of correlating crime and education is that we have been told, on high authority, that there are more university graduate criminals than university graduate policemen. Seemingly, Moriarty is ranged less against Sherlock Holmes than P. C. Plodd. That should serve us, as educationists, to take a humble, even mildly shocked, view of the destiny of our products, precious or otherwise. It is bracing not to be complacent. I recall arranging a large scale exhibition in a huge department store in the heart of Liverpool's inner city. 'You might as well do your exhibition here', said the store manager philosophically, 'most of your children do their shoplifting here'. As non-smugly as possible, therefore, I would like to take a look, so to speak, under the carpet of school and society, and offer a comment or two on the manner in which, in the frame of society, crime and education interlock.

My thesis is that sections of our society, especially some of its urban sectors, are disiocated and inchoate, and that, inescapably, this gives rise to a blurred area adverting to crime, ranging from outright illegality to that mixed malaise of hooliganisms, vandalism and disorder which afflicts some of our social life. This is cyclic: I shall not pause to apportion cause and effect, for the one exacerbates the other in vicious spiral. I must next say, baldly, that ours is an unfair society, and I believe that unfairness is one of the roots of that unharmonious society which has, as source and symptom, this measure of disorder. Education affords a good example, and an apposite one, although housing, income, transport, health and a dozen other instances would equally have served. Simply, it is possible from a knowledge of the social class composition of a town to hazard an informed guess at its educational results, irrespective of whether its schools are organised this or that way. Wallasey, almost an exact replica, in social composition, of the United Kingdom, has precisely the same percentage of sixth form and university places as the United Kingdom. This mini-UK, with 20% of its population in Social Classes 1 and 2 and 30% in Social Classes 4 and 5, regularly clocks up, like the nation at large, 19 or 20% of the age range staying on in the sixth and some 7% going to university. It is uncanny and frightening. Barking, with a predominantly working class population, had less than 9% in its sixth forms at the last count, and only 2.6% moving to University: Barnet with one of the largest middle-class components of populace in the country, had over 35% in the sixth and over 16% transferring to University.

It's obviously not a question of schools being for better or for worse, nor can genetics provide much of an answer, unless one is prepared to accept a dark malevolent genetic cloud descending over Barking leaving the Midwich Cuckoo-land of Barnet untouched. We have to face the unpalatable fact that, of themselves, our schools are not change-agents: more often are they agents of affirmation, unable to grapple fruitfully with the weight of home and neighbourhood and environment. The child, from birth, is immersed in a total experience which willynilly, educates him, whether we like it or not. All the

research and pragmatic observations of the last 20 years underlines this despairing brand of sociological Calvinism. Equality of opportunity is a shibboleth, simply because we cannot educate in a vacuum, and as teachers, we turn our backs on the catchment community at our peril.

And the same is true for all social and economic elements. One cannot treat of crime or social services or the labour mart or environmental conditions or whatever, alone. They are indivisible and indissoluble; all for one and one for all like a band of socio-economic Musketeers. So, just as we can interconnect educational failure with deprived, restless and fragmented communities, so can we do the same for crime. We can even do this for the educational felony of maladjustment, for according to the National Children's Bureau's Publication 'From Birth to Seven' 18% of working class seven year olds are said to be maladjusted as against 7% of middle class seven year olds on the normal Social Class Registers.

It takes only seven barristers and bank-managers to produce a university student, whereas it takes 35 miners, postmen, and milkmen. Yet this is neatly reversed on maladjustment. Every fifth child from Class 5 is maladjusted; every 16th child from Class 1 is maladjusted. Now I regret that time does not permit much argument about the pros and cons of this, or whether the tests used (either for university, advance or maladjustment) are culture-laden or class-biased, and whether the working class child has the police where the middle class child has child guidance officers and educational pyschologists. All I am attempting to sketch, for schooling, for crime, for any social feature, is a society, where in part, there is for children, injustice and disharmony.

In that situation we must therefore ask whether our institutions, be they educational or penal or what, are in rapport with the communities they serve. My own view is that a telling illustration – again, both as cause and effect – of the unjust and incohesive elements in our national life is the rift between institutions and people. It is salutory to recall that the Victorians who planned our schools were the same breed – often exactly the same personages as those who designed our hospitals, workhouses and prisons. All were on the factory formula, with a certain amount of military practice thrown in for good measure. The Victorian school had its head teacher, the prison its governor; the school was divided into classrooms in the charge of the teacher and the prison into wings supervised by a warder; the inmates of both were streamed by 'age, aptitude and ability', and the principle of incarceration was applied to each. Attendance at both was compulsory and visitors were treated with suspicion. I am still startled by the reminiscent similarity of a prison on a visiting day, that grey knock of anonymity, all grapes and Lucosade, waiting at hospital ward doors each evening; and an open evening in some schools. A curriculum of oakum-picking and mail bag stitching was matched in irrelevance and tedium by the functionless Gradgrindery of the school.

That was of course the Victorian school. All would protest that this has changed, just as prisons have relaxed the silence rule and installed piped music, although some might argue that that is part of the punishment. My question is: how much has it changed and has it changed sufficiently? When suggesting diffidently some years ago to a group of teachers that the children should be free to visit the lavatory whenever they wanted, one teacher said that, if such a ruling prevailed, Jimmy Robinson would stay there all the time.

Therein lies the crux: how do we make our classrooms as attractive as our urinals?

One point must be assured by now, and that is the folly of the call for stricter discipline which periodically comes from all those retired colonels, not least from those retired colonels who inhabit some of our classrooms. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am strongly in favour of discipline in schools. I was, as a secondary teacher, attacked twice by big boys, and there may be a message in the fact that I was never assaulted by big girls. One attacked me with his satchel, snarling 'watch it, you moaner!' the second, with fierceness of apparatus and language rising in direct proportion, with his chair shrieking 'watch it, you bleeder!' So I am in favour of discipline and of ensuring proper working conditions in a school. But I am not in favour of pretending that a Captain Bligh-cum-Simon Legree approach to school discipline produces children who, when those sanctions are removed, continue to lead blameless and God-fearing lives.

I do not argue that in any mood of candyfloss sentiment; I argue it in the sense that it doesn't work. It is arrogant to presume that the school, as an agent of indoctrination, is that powerful, and that its potency can outweigh the heavier influences of home, neighbourhood and peergroup. You will recollect the man serving 12 years in a Northern prison for grevious bodily harm, who questioning a visiting lecturer's suggestion that corporal punishment was a suspect measure, said 'I was caned a lot at school, and it never did me any harm'.

By the same token, those progressive elements in education, which have, in any case, been exaggerated as to their incidence, have not had the time, nor probably, the power to produce that undermining effect which is sometimes laid at their door. In any kind of time-scale of educational history, this cannot be said too strongly; in so far as schools influence society at all, the typology of education which has created the situation we face today is that education much prized by the whooping warriors of the Blackpaper Tribe and all the rest of the Klu Klux Klan in Mortar-Boards who occasionally light their flaming crosses of sterile academy in an attempt to frighten the masses. It is their sort of school which has lost touch with its clientele, both child and adult, and which has possibly created, in part, some sense of chasm between the institution and the community.

In brief, it is not what a school does but what it is. A school cannot train children, like sea-lions playing 'Pop Goes the Weasel' on a set of motor-horns, for the community it yearns for; the school is of the community for good or ill, and the children are up to the ears in their community for good or ill; they are not initiated into it at 16. The air-raid shelter view of the school in a troubled or dislocated community collapses because the blitzkrieg lasts 24 hours a day, and the shelter is open only five or six hours.

If communal disharmony is both product and producer of crime and other facets of social disorder, then the school should, at least, attempt to alleviate any of its own characteristics which contribute to that lack of social coherence. When the Plowden report recommended, for instance, that EPA Schools should be as good as the best in the country, it was a proposal open to misinterpretation. The lesson of the successful school in the suburban or affluent middle-class district is not 'go ye and do likewise' in conurbations, but, less scripturally, 'do your own things'. You cannot transplant the heart of one

school in one area to another school in a differing area, for the living cultural tissue will reject it. The middle-class school is often at one with its own community, apropos values, aspirations, vocabulary, mores and expectations. It leads and is led. The school in a less salubrious area finds this more difficult, for it would hate to be observed condoning certain aspects of high life in Brixton or Balsall Heath.

However, it could attempt to comprehend and sympathise. Many teachers have such sensitivities, but it requires the institution of the school, as an agency, to take upon itself the task of understanding. It is neither to condemn, nor to condone: it is, initially, a question of dialogue, of promoting a ready, fluent discourse between school and home and between school and neighbourhood. Take, for example, vandalism. Many of our youngsters know only the life-style of demolition; from their prams to their Junior schools they watch the hanging dust and hear the hollow roar of tumbling bricks, and sniff the noisome odour of burning homes. One day a man, armed with a highly efficient machine, will arrive from the Corporation to knock down some houses, perhaps his house; the next day this seven or eight year old might pitch a half-brick through the window of an abandoned house. We invite him to draw a subtle, moral distinction between the abundant legality of the one act and the awesome illegality of the other. Our professional training in child development, let alone our common sense, should tell us the nonsense of that, and cause us to ask is not ours a Vandal Society that creates such physical and emotional havoc? And do we search closely enough to resolve that intangible, indefinable phase when we begin to blame the child? At first, we accept that his parents or his house or his background have conditioned him to be thus and thus; imperceptibly, as he grows older, we shift the blame to the individual and start to neglect the conditioning.

It is very much to do with the style of the school, especially in its relations with parents and its choice and treatment of curriculum. There is ample testimony now from up and around the country that forms of Community Schooling, where parents and children are in closer social relation with teachers, and where teachers have allowed local cultural patterns to merge with the school ethos, that the stress quotiant is lessened and items like ill-discipline and truancy tend to fade. There is substantial evidence that when home-school relations are monitored according to the cultural form of the school's contract, the response is vastly improved. Similarly when not only the content of the curriculum, but the formula by which it is conducted, are softened to blend more fluidly with the youngster's environmental influences, then the atmosphere of the school is less tense. That this is conducive to improved academic attainment is important, but it is equally meaningful to note the pleasing effect on the all round consequence for the child in his everyday role.

Schools have hitherto offered uniformity of opportunity and it has been mistakenly labelled equality of opportunity. In a multivariant society, the routes to equality of opportunity must be manifold and legion, dependent upon the strengths and weakness of the prevailing environmental clime. Of course it is not easy. It is considerably easier to adopt the simplistic line that teaching is about the three R's and other narrowly conceived academic standardisations. That is the kind of single, cabined approach adapted by General Custer, and look what happened to him. Of course, teachers cannot reform schools without massive changes in training, attitudes, support ser-

vices and funds. Of course, even if they do produce such schools, because of at best, the relatively frail instrumentability of education as a weapon, it won't be enough unless housing, jobs, income and all the other aspects of social and economic life are similarly re-ordered. But this does not or should not alter the need to make the effort.

I have no wish to offer a facile solution; indeed, I prefer to urge and underline the crippling obstacles. Take the curriculum – it's fine persuading a teacher, reared on child-centredness, to do a project on the police, to choose an appropriate yet explosive instance. So on the blackboard goes the legend: 'People Who Help Us – The Policeman!' There could be a hoarse laugh from the children; the evaluation in some (not all) homes and some (not all) neighbourhoods could differ from the implicit evaluation of the school; the question has been begged and the trust between teacher and child threatened. As teachers, we know that policemen, like teachers, are sometimes thrust into situations where they cannot, where society wouldn't want them to, act on the avuncular Dixon of Dock Green caricature. As teachers, we know that, just as there are incompetent teachers, there may occasionally be incompetent policemen; I am not a police-knocker, I am a police historian: I was going to join the police, and in my mind's eye, 'Midwinter of the Yard' would have been every popular Sunday Newspaper's most popular headline. As an afficiando of 'Softly, Softly', I have had protracted correspondence with the programmes producer, during which it was discovered that only two people – a long-serving script assistant and I – knew the name of Charlie Barlow's wife, and her untimely death in a road accident just outside Kingsley the week after I divulged this has haunted me with guilt-feelings ever since. I am suggesting that it might be fairer to all-concerned – child, parent, policemen, teacher – to examine the issue more critically and objectively. And those of you who have been in the staffroom the morning after the night before when the teacher who was knocked off for speeding on the way home, following his lesson on 'aren't our policemen wonderful', will recollect that the teacher's non-teacher view of the police can itself become a trifle jaundiced.

I raise this as a query – Is it possible for the school – the community school – thus to be open and critical in its dealings with both children and adults? Let me tell a slight tale, trivial in itself, but very authentic and maybe illustrative. A gifted musician, a coloured boy, and bandsman at a Liverpool city school, was stopped by a policeman on his way home and told to explain how he came to be carrying a clarinet. The policeman, unbelieving, instructed the boy to play a tune to prove his case. Luckily, he was able to oblige, and one would like to imagine he piped something like 'if you want to know the time, ask a policeman'. He could, of course, have just begun lessons, and hereby unable to meet the request. All I would add is that a boy carrying a clarinet away from a well set-up grammar school in a good-class area is unlikely to be questioned by the poilce. I attach no blame. The policeman was acting on his probably quite correct perception of the norms for that inner city district.

In its small way, that story points to the necessity for communities and their providing agencies – teachers, policemen and everyone – to adapt and adopt, to find common terms and common denominators by which to live and interact. Matthew Arnold spoke disapprovingly of the Hebraic theme of 'strictness of conscience' as a guide-line to life in general and education

n particular; he looked forward to its replacement by the Hellenic principle
of 'spontaneity of consciousness' as the criterion for civilised living and
educating. Only by an education for social consciousness, as opposed to a
schooling in formal allegiance to preconceived conscience, can teachers
hope to combat crime. Such an education would contribute to the kind of
serene society in which the stress and malfunction that leads to disorder
would be reduced. Telling, even forcing children, to be what we call 'good'
is professionally inefficient and barely effective, even in the short-term: our
chief and long-term hope must lie in giving children a 'good' society in
which to live.

Crime Prevention –
The Contribution of the School
by Michael Power

Introduction

It may be helpful to begin by summarising what we know about the characteristics of juvenile delinquency. Of course, many studies (Belson *(1)*; Gold *(2)*; and West *(3)*) report that stealing occasionally is very wide-spread amongst a majority of children in various representative samples that have been studied. However, there is also the suggestion from these data that those admitting the most frequent acts of delinquency are, understandably, more likely to be caught and therefore officially known. Generally, what we know about juvenile delinquency is still to a considerable extent based upon our knowledge of the children who are caught. Some years ago it was established that about one boy in every 7 or 8 in England and Wales had been found guilty of an indictable offence by his 17th birthday (Douglas *(4)*), the corresponding proportion for girls being about one in 30. We have known for a long while that the rates in urban areas are higher than for rural and there is some evidence to show – as one might expect – that the inner city districts have the highest rates of all (Power *(5)*). Some years ago a study of what is now Inner London showed that about one boy in 5 came to official notice by the 17th birthday and recent work in two London Boroughs puts the proportion at one in 4. However, even within a single Inner City Borough there is considerable variation between quite small neighbourhoods. Of course, it is now well recognised that human settlements of millions of people are a very unsuitable environment in which to raise children.

In cities the rules that govern social behaviour are complex and it is not surprising that children sometimes find difficulty in threading their way through without colliding with authority. That such collisions are frequent for some is shown by the fact that of all boys officially coming to notice for a first time, half of them will be known again to the Police and the Courts. In turn, half of those known a second time come to notice a third time; and so on. In fact, as far as boys are concerned, the most difficult problem facing the Police, the Social Services and the Courts is that of the persistent juvenile offender. Girls are less prone to this; and in any case the reasons why they come to notice are usually different. Despite recent and worrying increases in the rate of violent offences the overwhelming majority of boys of school age who become delinquent, are still concerned with offences against property. It is the older boys of 15 and 16 who are more likely to be concerned with such offences as taking cars, minor assault or carrying offensive weapons.

Neighbourhood, Family and School Influences

I want now to outline the social factors that influence children's behaviour. First, neighbourhood. It is clear that the chances of becoming delinquent vary even within the Inner City. In our studies of delinquency

in Tower Hamlets which, as you know, is still predominantly a working-class community, there is as much variation in neighbourhood delinquency rates within that Borough as there is between the rates for the Inner City and the outer suburbs.

Then family. It has long been established that certain kinds of family difficulties place children at greater risk. Many studies have shown that children from families where the parents have separated are more likely to become delinquent (Douglas *(6)*; West *(7)*; Power *(8)*); however, although children from broken homes carry a higher risk it should not be forgotten that the majority of those who are delinquent come from intact families with both parents permanently at home. Recently there has been a good deal of interesting work on the nature of family influences that lead to delinquent behaviour, but this morning I have been asked to focus more upon the school.

Turning to school as an influence – we have known for some years, and other studies have confirmed this (Power *(9)*; Clegg *(10)*; Macdonald *(11)*; West *(12)*; Rutter *(13)*; Reynolds *(14)*) that delinquency varies between schools. If the number of boys in a school who are officially delinquent, is calculated as a proportion of all boys who are pupils of a school, the resulting delinquency rate enables a first comparison between schools.

Table 1

SCHOOLS

First appearances before the courts (cases proved) 1958/59–1962/63

Secondary schools in Tower Hamlets	Average annual delinquency rate per 1,000 boys aged 11 - 14
J	6
R	11
B	13
N	19
D	23
P	23
G	28
O	34
L	35
F	35
C	36
E	38
S	39
T	39
H	46
U	48
W	49
A	59
Q	63
M	77

Smallest school: on average 80 boys aged 11-14
Largest school: on average 577 boys aged 11-14

In Tower Hamlets, between 1958 and 1963, there were 20 secondary schools serving the Borough, excluding the 6 grammar schools and a number of special schools. We found that the proportion of boys delinquent for a first time varied between less than 1% per year to over 7% per year. When we examined data over a longer period for 11 schools out of the original 20, they were broadly unchanged over a decade. Not only did we find similar variation between low and high rates between schools, but a quite remarkable consistency.

Table 2 SCHOOLS

First appearances before the courts (cases proved), 1958/59–1967/68

Secondary schools in Tower Hamlets	Average annual first appearance rate per 1,000 boys aged 11 - 14		
	1958/59-1967/68	1958/59-1962/63*	1963/64-1967/68
R	13	11	15
B	14	13	14
N	21	19	23
D	25	23	27
P	26	23	29
S	37	39	35
T	45	39	50
C	46	36	60
U	53	48	58
O	56	34	97
A	59	59	58
	36	31	42

*from Table 1

As far as it has been possible to do so, we have attempted to identify factors associated with this variation. So far we know more about what it is not due to rather than positively identifying the reasons for the differences. School delinquency rate is not just a reflection of the catchment area served by the school; nor do the main external characteristics such as school size; age of buildings; voluntary or L.A. school; single or mixed sex school, explain the difference. One study in another part of London has suggested such differences were due to children being selectively placed on the basis of their behaviour in particular secondary schools. Other studies, most recently concerned with difficult behaviour in primary schools, report a school factor, independent of the nature of the intake or the neighbourhood served.

Whatever the reason for these variations, it is clear that those responsible for allocating resources and deciding on priorities for the secondary school age group should take into account the fact that some schools have a lot more of this problem than others. From the beginning our interest has been primarily with those schools with consistently low delinquency rates.

with many pupils living in high delinquency neighbourhoods. Here was an important possibility for prevention. If some schools were doing a good job protecting their pupils from the rise of delinquency it might be possible to make some dent in, what all too often, appears to be an intractable problem, particularly once persistent delinquent behaviour is established.

In discussions of the part schools may play often a rather abstract view is expressed as though schools may or may not be able to compensate for deficiencies in the family and nieghbourhood, without any recognition that they may differ in their ability to do so. Evidence from the Report on Primary Education, chaired by Lady Plowden *(15)*, shows that primary schools varied considerably. When the HMI's were asked during the course of that enquiry to classify all 20,000 primary schools in England and Wales, allocating them to one of nine categories, nearly a third (6,000) were placed in the first three categories, described as:- "(1) schools of outstanding ability; (2) a good school with some outstanding features; (3) a good school in most respects." By contrast nearly 14% (3,000) of the schools were classified as:- (7)"curate's egg schools – good and bad features; (8) markedly out of touch with current practice and knowledge and few compensatory features; (9) bad schools where children suffer from laziness, indifference, gross incompetence and unkindness on the part of the staff." (Fortunately, there were only 28 schools in this last category at that time.) Another study in the West Riding of Yorkshire by Clegg and Megson *(16)* showed a wide variation of delinquency rates and their view was that some schools could do little to help disadvantaged children, whilst others a great deal. Why should there be such differences and how might they influence children's behaviour?

The School as a Social Institution

As a start we should acknowledge that English education has always been as much concerned with character development and the personality of the child as it has with academic attainment. That this is so is well illustrated by a study commissioned by the Schools Council some years ago on young school leavers. In 1968 Morton Williams *(17)* reported marked differences in the most important educational objectives held on the one hand by school leavers and on the other by their head teachers. Both groups were asked to rank in order of importance 25 possible school objectives. The 15-year olds selected most frequently:- (1) to teach you things which will help you get a good job or career; (2) to teach you things which will be of direct use to you in your job; (3) to teach you how to manage your money when you are earning and about things like rates and income tax; (4) to teach you about different sorts of jobs and careers so that you can decide what you want to do; (5) to teach you to be able to put things in writing easily. From the same list, the heads selected as their five most important objectives:- (1) personality and character; (2) speaking well; (3) independence; (4) behaving confidently and at ease; (5) about right and wrong. The school leavers' second choice – "things of direct use in jobs" – was selected least frequently by the heads. It is, of course, not surprising that school leavers rate highly short-term objectives about occupational opportunities whilst their teachers are more concerned with the long-term objectives of personality, character and values. As well as showing the high priority

teachers give to influencing behaviour it is at the same time an indication of the social distance that can exist between teacher and pupil, based as it is, upon different sets of values. Some schools work for and succeed in achieving common aims shared alike by staff and pupils; others, in the way that they are organised, may actually widen the gap. How this may come about was convincingly described in a study of one secondary school by Hargreaves *(18)*, in which he showed the influence of such organisational matters as streaming upon teachers' and their pupils' attitudes and educational progress and upon their social development. He also described the influence of the peer group within the class room in reinforcing the confidence of the brighter children and further undermining the poorer performance of those of below average ability.

Much remains to be done before we understand the complex situation that leads some schools to enhance and others apparently to hinder their pupils' social development. Even then, where a school has an appropriate curriculum; pays attention to social and vocational needs as well as to academic attainment; is fortunate in having a settled staff and pupils who stay, such fortunate institutions are unlikely to help all children. Evidence from work in progress is beginning to suggest that children who come from grossly unsettled and disrupted families are quite incapable of learning in a day school, even under the most favourable conditions; yet others from ordinary families without gross problems fail to find in the school opportunities to learn about what really interests them; and in this frame of mind they may be very vulnerable to the influence of class mates who, for family reasons, cannot learn.

However, there are many examples of schools succeeding with children who one might think were exposed to outside adverse experiences. For example, a recent study of school children from naval families who, because of the demands of their father's job, move home at least once every two years and sometimes annually showed that, contrary to expectation, children of above and of average ability were making good progress and in fact were often regarded by their teachers as bright children who had much to offer others. Good teaching built upon the positive results of mobility such as the stimulation of travel, knowledge of other countries and an adaptability to new circumstances. Secondary school children who lack confidence, sometimes because they had never felt highly valued in their family and therefore achieve less than they might otherwise do, responded warmly and surprisingly quickly to extra attention given to them by their teachers, making measurable progress when someone took the trouble to find out what they could do well and planned with them work around the things they could do successfully. Such 'under-achievers' showed measurable gains in educational attainment within a year.

In one sense it has long been recognised that schools, as institutions, are responsible for the socialisation of children – just as families are considered to play an important part in determining behaviour. As we are beginning to understand the elements of family life that promote or hinder children's social development, so we need with more precision to be able to identify school factors that do the same.

To summarise, the delinquency rates for boys and for girls vary considerably between neighbouring schools within the same Borough. This has now

been reported several times both in this country and in the United States. Why this should be so is not yet clear. Certainly the standard considerations of social class, so strongly linked to educational outcome in national studies, do not explain the difference. So far on other factors, such as the selection of badly behaved children for certain secondary schools, the available evidence is contradictory and more work is needed, particularly by comparing schools with consistently low and consistently high rates. Recently secondary schools have come under considerable pressure both from within and without; despite this some schools working in very adverse circumstances, do a damn good job in keeping their pupils out of trouble; and I am sure we still have much to learn from them.

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Children at risk in school – a police view
by Peter Marshall

I have found that few people are inhibited from giving their views on juvenile delinquents and crime by their lack of factual knowledge. Perhaps the most helpful contribution I can make to this conference will be to indicate something of the extent and nature of the juvenile crime phenomenon in the Metropolitan Police District. Of course, London is not typical of the rest of the country; there may still be places where 'scrumping' is the main problem; but what is happenning in London today is echoed in Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and all our other major cities.

In the past, informed debate on this subject has been hampered by a lack of appreciation of the real size of the problem faced by law enforcement and remedial agencies. In an attempt to remedy this, I have examined the records of our juvenile bureaux in London since their inception in 1969. (For convenience, I will use the term 'juvenile' to cover the 10-16 age group throughout this paper.)

In the period 1969-1973 indictable crimes known to the Metropolitan Police increased by 10.5%.

During the same period, arrests for indictable crimes (all age groups) increased by 18%. Arrests in the adult (17 plus) age group increased by 10%. Arrests of juveniles increased by 40%. In 1969, 26.5% of all indictable crime arrests were of juveniles. By 1973, the proportion had risen to 31%, and this amounted to 28,815 out of a total of 88,796.

Of course these offences include many which could be classed as petty, but some of the steepest increases have been in categories of crime which must be regarded as serious.

Burglary

In 1973, 5820 juvenile arrests were made for burglary – a 15% increase over 1969; 52.5% of all arrests for burglary involved juveniles.

Robbery and theft from the person

In 1973, 974 juvenile arrests were made for robbery or theft from the person – a 105% increase over 1969. 39% of all arrests for these offences involved juveniles.

Woundings and assaults

In 1973, 899 juvenile arrests were made for wounding and assault – an 80.9% increase over 1969. 14.26% of all arrests for these offences involved juveniles.

Autocrimes

(Theft of and from m/vehicles and unauthorised takings)

In 1973, 6492 juvenile arrests were made for autocrimes – a 68% increase over 1969. 41% of all arrests for these offences involved juveniles.

Some facts on Persistent Offenders

The volume of juvenile arrests should be seen against the total population in the 10-16 age group. The nearest figure I can obtain is for the Greater London Council area, which is slightly smaller than the Metro-

politan Police District. In 1971 the GLC population of 10-16 year olds was 669,600. During the same year there were 25,942 juvenile arrests. To put it another way, the equivalent of 3.8% or nearly 1 in 25 of the juvenile population was arrested for indictable crime – more than 1 member of every class in every school.

In an attempt to learn more about the hard core of juvenile offenders, each division compiled a profile of its most persistent juvenile recidivists. No weighting was given for relative seriousness of offences, the sole criterion being the number of referrals to the bureau.

From this data we first took all those with 15 or more referrals each. This gave us a total of 105.

Between them they had amassed a total of 2151 referrals, an average of 20.3 each. Between them they had been accused of 3735 offences, an average of 35.2 each.

22 had been convicted of robbery
89 had been convicted of burglary
101 had been convicted of theft
74 had been convicted of autocrime

The average age at which the last referral was made was 14¼. 71 had brothers or sisters who had been referred to a juvenile bureau.

40 had been to a detention centre
10 had been to borstal
3 had been to both

89 were described as frequent or occasional truants and 24 were attending special schools (either for maladjusted children, ESN or community homes). 13 were not attending any school, either because no school would have them or they were receiving private tuition.

Although the samples were widely distributed throughout the MPD, the majority of cases came from those areas commonly supposed to contain the greatest measures of urban stress and deprivation.

Our sample had been involved in 1057 court appearances, an average 10 each, and many had further court appearances pending. All had been the subject of a care order, either as a result of criminal or care proceedings.

The 88 boys who were made the subject of care orders as a result of criminal proceedings made a further 510 court appearances for separate offences after the initial care order had been made.

In case you may feel this sample of 105 is exceptional, we found that if we lowered the qualification to a minimum of 10 referrals, we included another 112 whose profile differed very little from the first group.

We are faced with a hard core of persistent offenders seemingly resistant to all remedial measures.

The Police Response

I will now describe briefly our response to this situation.

I have mentioned our juvenile bureaux and it would be appropriate to outline their function.

Each division has a juvenile bureau through which all alleged juvenile offenders are processed.

In all but the most serious cases, a juvenile arrested for crime is not charged forthwith but is released to the custody of the parent or guardian. The case papers are forwarded to the bureau and enquiries are made of

police records, social services departments and education welfare officers to ascertain the previous history of the juvenile. Additionally, a police officer from the bureau will make a home visit to establish the parental attitude to the child and his alleged offence. The Chief Inspector (or Superintendent) in charge of the bureau will consider this background information when he decides whether the alleged offender should be prosecuted, cautioned or subject to no further action. Before a juvenile can be cautioned, he must admit the offence and his parent or guardian must agree to the procedure and the victim must also agree to abide by the police decision. (In 1973 35% of alleged offenders were cautioned.)

From this bare outline you may see the considerable opportunities that now exist for police to liaise and co-operate with other agencies including social services and education in the field of children at risk. From an initial atmosphere of suspicion and resentment, police have now established a working relationship with a wide range of agencies, and we are prepared to extend these links in the interests of children at risk.

The Schools Programme

For many years now the police force has been involved in the schools, mainly in the field of road safety, but it is only since 1972 that a comprehensive and co-ordinated effort has been made on a much broader basis. Within the Metropolitan Police District the primary responsibility for schools visits rests with the CLO and the Juvenile Bureau Staff. Additionally Home Beat Officers are active in this field, in some cases so successfully that the schools have 'adopted' their local Home Beat Officer and he is referred to as 'our policeman'. Those officers maintain regular and informal contact with the schools and their relationship is such that they are frequently asked to attend prize days as principal guests, or are asked to accompany the classes on school visits, etc. There is no doubt that their efforts are extremely valuable both to the community and to the police service. The more formal programme is run through the Juvenile Bureau. In Greater London we have some 4,500 schools catering for approximately 1¼ million pupils and during 1973 police officers spent not less than 4,000 man hours in the schools. The ideal situation would be for us to go into the infants school with a view to building up a good relationship between police and children and to attempt to ensure their personal safety e.g. by showing the film 'Never go with Strangers', and by road safety, water safety, and 'play-safe' campaigns. This contact would continue through the Junior Schools with role playing exercises, road safety and general knowledge competitions, and then develop in the Senior Schools with Mock Courts, projects and visits to Police stations, all aimed at promoting good citizenship and adult responsibility. Naturally we cannot give this comprehensive service to every school because of the inevitable demands of time and manpower, and so we compromise with a variety of activities based on the main theme. Where priorities have to be made, it has been decided that our main effort will be to concentrate on the senior secondary schools, with the intention of preserving the interest of those who are already well disposed to police and attempting to discourage those who are on the fringe of crime.

Crime Prevention Patrols

Before the end of the Summer Term 1974 a number of divisions mounted

crime prevention patrols directed at juveniles absent from school. There is enough evidence available to convince police of the strong link between truancy and crime, so much so that in one division in London, daytime crime in connection with thefts of and from motor vehicles dropped to nil during the time that the patrols were in operation. In one London Borough, during the course of 12 school days, a crime patrol of six officers stopped over seven hundred truants, and during that time there was a 26% decrease in motor vehicle crime, a 36% decrease in petty crimes, and a significant decrease in burglaries. It should be made clear that it is no part of the police function to ensure that children attend school for the purpose of the Education Act – this responsibility lies clearly with the local authority who are responsible for enforcing the requirements of the Act, but it should also be said that the work of the police is affected by large scale truancy, part-time education and the weakness of other traditional factors of behavioural control in many parts of London.

At an ILEA Conference between Police and Teachers at the Bloomsbury Centre in May 1974, nostalgic reference was made to the old school Attendance Officer; but the sad fact is that today many teachers would rather be without the disruptive influence of the persistant truant and would not welcome his return amongst those who are willing to learn. Incidentally, the common belief that juvenile crime is highest during the school holidays and lowest during term time is not reflected in the experience of our juvenile bureaux; in many divisions, the reverse appears to be true.

Liaison with other Agencies

In the field of schools involvement police have not adopted an ostrich approach, we have always consulted Education Authorities and specialists with a view to discovering the needs and the remedies. Apart from the constant and continuing contact with local headteachers we are regular attenders, both as delegates and speakers, at National and Local Conferences and we are in regular contact with both Central and Local Government.

On some divisions we have set up Police/Teacher Committees to tailor the police effort to local needs and to see what other joint measures can be taken to improve our response to children at risk.

The Community Relations Branch and the Community Liaison Officers are constantly on the look out for new contacts and for new ways of improving police – schools – community relations, and no reasonable request for co-operation from a responsible organisation is ever refused by Police.

Many CLO's have attended school and Education Authority Weekend-Residential conferences and delegates from A7 Branch have attended DHSS and DES Conferences on associated matters.

Conclusion

Time prevents me from giving you precise details of the variety of involvement and the depth of enthusiasm that police officers have with the Schools Programme, but I must emphasize that we regard this activity as vital to the future well being of the community that we serve. Many head teachers and their staff have declared that they regard police involvement in the life of their schools as an essential item and not just an 'optional extra luxury'.

We believe that contact with schools in not just a marginal exercise in community relations.

We believe that our experience of children and crime can contribute to a greater understanding of the nature of the problem of deviant behaviour in an urban setting: I would dare to suggest that we have become more outward looking in this field than many of the other agencies involved with children at risk. I invite those agencies to follow our example and seek our contributions in every way.

Schools and Welfare Agencies
by Anne Jones

May I begin by saying how pleased and honoured I am to be here as the statutory representative of the main focus of today's Conference, namely the school. Conscious as I am of being in the hot seat, my first reaction is to step back and take a long cool look at the current situation in our schools. Like Eric Midwinter, I am only too aware that schools are not as almighty, all powerful or as God-awful as many would have us believe. Their influence upon the pupil is not as great as that of their parents or society: yet parents, society and schools behave at times as if it was. Parents pass over their offspring lock, stock and barrel, saying: "You deal with her, I can't do nuffink with her!" Society has latched on to the fact that schools, in many cases, are more likely to make contact with difficult children and their families than other agencies, and futhermore not only make contact but keep up that contact. Schools, for their part, flattered by this enhanced role, and conscientious as ever, thus begin to try to do the work of parents, of social workers, of society for them. It sounds good but it isn't good for many reasons.

First, it's an impossible job, and one for which teachers have neither the time, the training, nor always the skills, even if they are willing and able to have a go. Second, it debilitates and saps both parents, pupils and society if school takes over their responsibilities: the aim of the school should be to involve them more. Third, it splits school off from the rest of society in an unreal 'last bastion' role which means that the school and the community it serves become out of touch with each other. Canute-like, Bastille-like, alas too often Prison-like, schools bravely battle against the forces of society, seeking to compensate for the deficiencies thereof. Whatever society has failed to do elsewhere, schools are expected to make good. Let me tell you a secret: we can't do it. It's an impossible job. It stops us doing our real job.

We are faced now with a situation in which the teacher is in great conflict: he is not sure what he should teach or how he should teach it. He tries to make his lessons more 'relevant' but to the children they are still 'school' and may still be rejected out of hand. He sees the need to work with the 'whole' child, taking into account developmental, socio-economic, and psychological factors. He wonders if he has been in the past too rigid, authoritarian, controlling, directive, or judgmental. He tries, therefore, to avoid all that, and endeavours to be child-centred, consumer-orientated, flexible, democratic, non-directive and non-judgmental whether or not this is appropriate. He finds the welfare and social services too remote and too wrapped up in red tape to give his pupils the help they need, so he tries to help his pupils himself, and visit their homes when their parents need sorting out. He knows parents are important because someone called Lady Plowden told him so, but he does not see any difference between what he can do and what a social worker might do if he had the time. Not that he has much free time as he only gets the minimum number of free periods and

he needs those to recover from the classroom. But how can he ignore the problems his pupils present him with? He is best placed to deal with them; he sees them everyday, his pupils tell him everything. He's their friend, their counsellor, a kind of father-figure. He looks after their total welfare – and the only trouble is that the naughty ones, about a third, take up all his time, so he feels guilty about the ones who don't have any problems, (well they can't have if they don't get into trouble). They don't get on with their school work according to their Age, Aptitude and Ability, like they're supposed to. And the other problem is that he's beginning to get rather tired and he's having a job to work out that new community – orientated environmental programme he's just started teaching. And although the kids are supposed to be self-directing and find out everything for themselves, it doesn't seem to work when you just tell them to get on with it then – usually they disappear into the community and never come back!

This caricature, exaggerated as it is, epitomises the dilemma of the committed, sensitive teacher who is suffering from confusion: role confusion, identity confusion. He has made his job as teacher so big that in the end he has neglected his 'raison d'etre'. He is paid as a teacher, he is trained as a teacher, and that is his main job. If he is pushed by pressures from without and seduced by his own professional pride into attempting to do everything for all his pupils, he may end by teaching badly. He needs professional help from other agencies – not because he is inadequate, not because he doesn't care, not even because he isn't trained as a social worker (or counsellor) although he isn't, but because he does not have the time to be all things to all pupils. Neither does he have the role; it may be very desirable for a counsellor to be non-directive, non-judgmental and non-authoritarian, for a teacher to emulate this rigidly can be well nigh disastrous. He must give directions, he must judge and assess pupils' worth, he must exercise the authority he carries: he does not have to do this in an unpleasant way.

But if he fails to accept his role as teacher what hope have his class of being pupils? Before we know where we are non-directive becomes 'without a sense of direction'; non-judgmental becomes 'unable to make a judgement or decision'; non-authoritarian becomes 'without any authority'. Our pupils will not see the point of school unless we see the point of school. And the point is not to be a social welfare agency: if we were meant to be social welfare agencies we would not be called schools. Neither would we work with the ridiculous case loads, lack of supervision and constant pressure of lack of time which every school faces daily. So if schools are overburdened and pressurised by their social problems, why don't they get more help from other agencies? Why not indeed. Many of the blockages to effective communication are alas, based on ignorance and fantasy on all sides. A kind of 'us and them' syndrome sets in which I suppose is a kind of desperate defence against one's own inadequacy: we (the school) have done everything for that child but (1) his parents are hopeless (2) social services never do anything. Conversely the parents may say that the school is the cause of the problems; social services may say that they're not surprised the kid has problems the way the school treats him, and so on. Only too rarely do all parties get together, sink their differences and work out what

they can each do respectively to help the child. Even case conferences can become precarious buck-passing exercises, a kind of musical parcel game in which each party tries to pass the buck on to the other, if only to alleviate themselves of the blame when (inevitably) the problem continues to remain a problem.

I exaggerate of course. But there is much more of this kind of thing going on than we can afford, either in terms of manpower, expertise, and most of all in terms of the future well-being of our young people. In particular social workers and teachers need to have a much clearer idea of the similarities and differences between the way they work. To the social worker the teacher may appear to be interfering, controlling, manipulative, over-involved, hasty to act, unable to listen properly, blind to obvious cries for help given out by the child, possessive, judgmental and unreasonable. To the teacher the social worker may appear to be too young and inexperienced, naive, gullible, easily manipulated, slow to act, impossible to contact on the phone, elusive and therefore defensive, ignorant of what the pupil is really like, ineffectual, soft, on the child's side. However much or however little truth there is in these stereotypes, they can only damage and hinder the work which should be going on between the school and the welfare agencies.

But there are other problems too which stop schools from making effective use of other agencies. I have already touched upon the professional pride of the teacher; teachers are curiously reluctant to ask for help or advice, for traditionally the teacher is king of his classroom and soldiers on alone. It is NOT an admission of failure for a teacher to say a pupil of his has problems. Too often teachers do not admit their doubts about a pupil, as if they feared this somehow reflected upon their teaching ability. A classic syndrome I have observed in every school I've ever worked in is for a pupil to be allowed to disrupt lesson after lesson until finally, when all the teachers are at screaming pitch, it is decided to bring in help from a specialist agency. Alas the child guidance clinic is not able to wave a magic wand, particularly when the problem has been allowed to fester for so long, and so the school decides that child guidance is no good. But the problem may be that the school has not referred the pupil to specialists soon enough. Far too often teachers don't ask for help, schools don't ask for help until they are desperate, which is almost inevitably too late.

The trouble is that even when a teacher does notice and admit a problem in a pupil, very often he doesn't know who to ask about it. Although in most schools there are now specialists in pastoral care (Heads of House or Year) it would be fair to say that not all these have been trained to recognise a problem which needs referring on to someone else. Educational psychologists are so over worked that they are too hard to catch. School counsellors or school social workers can provide an invaluable service here, but alas they are still few and far between. Relatively few schools attempt any systematic screening or diagnosis of their pupils when they are in their first year in order to identify pupils who are 'at risk' and may need extra help. Thus most of the children who get help from other agencies, do so only at a point of crisis and because they have made a nuisance of themselves. The ones who are not a nuisance are much less likely to get help, which is even more disturbing. Often it is too late to do much – for example it is very difficult to get a maladjusted child into a maladjusted boarding

school over the age of 13, yet it may have taken two years for his problems to crystallise. How much easier to help if the school had realised the extent of his difficulties earlier. It is important also to ask why secondary schools do not liaise better with primary schools on this question of 'early detection'.

Another factor which stops schools and agencies working as closely as they might, is the justifiable fear of the agencies that if they pass back any information, it will become staffroom gossip and handicap the pupil further. Confidentiality is a sore point in most staff rooms: but the line to be drawn between confidential information and gossip is a very fine one, and easily broken. Alas if only social workers knew how much our 'wickeder' pupils had already damaged their reputations and how much staff already knew about the home background! Most discouraging of all for the pupil who is trying to improve, is the reputation he has already: what I call the punitive vicious circle! It is so hard for teachers to recognise when a child is really trying to make a 'new start', and so, discouraged, the child may give up.

Between the two professions there may be a blockage in terms of language. We hear a lot about the restricted language code in terms of social class: but inter-professionally it can be a barrier too. I remember when I was a counsellor giving a talk to some Head teachers: I started talking about the 'support' I gave the teachers. One Head who had been looking rather sceptical, reacted visibly at this point and said with great relief: "Ah, you mean you stand by the teachers through thick and thin and take his side against the pupil!" I did not mean that. But no wonder there are misunderstandings when we use language so differently!

Another problem within schools which must cause frustration for other agencies lies in the chain of command. Gone (I hope) are the days when the Head fondly imagines he can handle all contacts with outside agencies. But it is no more healthy for this responsibility to be vested solely in another member of the hierarchy, or even simply in the Heads of House or Year. There is nothing more frustrating and demoralising for an astute and perceptive form teacher than to have to take his 'problem' to someone else, who then proceeds to process it through the hierarchical machine until eventually (if you press the right button) a very second hand answer winds its way back through the red tape. I am sure our form teachers would be less tempted either to go it alone or to deny the problems they face, if they were supported (in any sense) in making contact with agencies themselves. I find, for example, in my position as Head, that is is ludicrous for me to discuss a child I hardly know with a social worker: it's not that I'm not interested, but the interaction needs to be with the person who is most intimately concerned with that child, not only because of the two-way exchange of information but also because that teacher is going to be in a position to help the pupil: he may discover, for example, he was colluding with the child's problems and was 'rewarding' his disturbing, attention-seeking behaviour. So often there comes into play these days what I call the law of diminishing expectations'. 'Officer Klopsky I'm really a slob' as the song in West Side Story puts it. Some of our kids are very astute at playing up their problems. 'Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed'. We really do have to watch this.

So what can schools do to help children at risk more effectively? And how can they work more fruitfully with the agencies which service their pupils? First what schools can do. First and foremost they should concentrate on teaching, as wholeheartedly, as passionately, as imaginatively, as inventively and as meaningfully as they can: of course they must use the resources of the environment, of the community, of the parents, of the pupils, of themselves: but they must not be ashamed to teach the skills that children want and need. Many of our pupils are half-hearted about school because schools are not sure what they are trying to do. When teachers are in conflict and doubt, pupils will be at risk.

Second, the school system must be designed to serve the needs of the pupils, not to stifle them! Pupils' needs include being valued, being given responsibility, being trusted, being given room to breathe and grow and make mistakes, being given a secure but flexible framework, being given a sense of purpose, being set some limits and being asked to do not as little as possible, but as much as possible. So often the organisation of a school ossifies and begins to contradict its stated objectives at which point both staff and pupils switch off and parents despair. In particular it is vital for the academic and pastoral aspects of the school to be integrated and not split, otherwise the one may unwittingly contradict the other: we trust you but we lock you out in the lunch hour. What is a child to make of that double message?

The pastoral care system must be one in which every member of staff feels he can play a part: senior staff need to support and train younger staff so that they can share actively the responsibility they have, develop their skills, learn who to ask what, when to refer and so on. Regular case discussions can be invaluable both in training staff and developing team work: but the essential thing to learn is the limits of one's job, not to be ashamed to seek advice or pass on the problem.

Schools need to make efforts to meet the staff of other agencies: for example to invite them in to talk about the way they work, or to discuss a particular child. Staff need help in learning how to write a report for a social worker, how to conduct an interview, how to write a letter to a parent or a social worker, how to keep relevant and helpful records. Our colleagues from other agencies could certainly help us here.

A school needs to develop the best main system it can: it is disastrous to keep patching up a poor system by adding on extras. Nevertheless, there is in my opinion a very good case for employing both a counsellor and a school social worker in a school. One of their main functions is to relieve the teacher of problems which are not really within his aegis but which press upon him. Both can be invaluable resource points in a staffroom, both 'information' points, and as 'listening ears' for a member of staff who is trying to work out what to do. In my experience, however good the response from the local education welfare office and the social services, they cannot provide in school the depth or breadth of help required. The school social worker is particularly vital in home/school relations: since Plowden teachers have tried more and more to penetrate pupils' homes, but not always with great success. Home visiting is, in my opinion, a professional job, best done by a specialist and trained member of staff. Again, the aim is to relieve the teacher of the anxiety he feels about the home, and to get the

job well done.

Other preventive measures in schools abound: diagnostic and screening systems, nurture groups, opportunity classes, tutorial groups, intensive language programmes, compensatory units, sanctuaries, off-site centres for school refusers: all these have their merits but will be ineffectual if the main system of the school is not right.

Agencies serving the pupils of a school need to take much more time and care in communicating what they are doing, why and how to the school. They need to feed back to the school much more about what is happening; without breaking confidentiality. They will find the school a rich source of help and information, which could be harnessed much more effectively in the service of the child at risk. Only by understanding the differences and the limitations of the way they each work, will schools and agencies be freed to help each other get on with their particular job. There will always be children 'at risk': but we need to put our energy into getting effective help for these children, not into demarcation disputes and perpetual soul searching.

We all need each other because we do different but complementary jobs. Let us admit that need for the sake of the children we serve.

Postscript
by Lady Plowden

'Children at risk in school' was the third of six national events intended to break new ground in discussion of crime by dealing with the problem of how to prevent it. We had learned from our meetings with architects/town planners and journalists/broadcasters how hard it is to concentrate attention on this elusive topic. So it is difficult to say what one hoped would be the outcome of this conference. One of the most encouraging signs before the conference, however, was the interest and support shown by the various teachers' unions, which has continued since then.

But before it took place, I wondered whether it would exacerbate attitudes of teachers and social workers, with each feeling that the other did not understand the problems of their particular discipline. Would it strengthen the feeling among some teachers that the schools are being made the scapegoats for the ills which have their causes in the uncertainties and failures of present day society? Would it promote a greater understanding on the part of those within the schools of the difficulties experienced by many families and the gulf which often exists between the aims of the schools and the realities of what can be achieved? Would it throw light on what a school can do to make itself an attractive place of learning for the adolescent 'at risk', rather than a place, (to quote a recent letter from a head-teacher in a forward-looking school) where "the lavatories are kept locked during lessons to prevent girls congregating in them"?

Or might the conference promote a deeper understanding between different professionals and witnin the teaching profession itself, all of whom are hoping that the children and young people for whom they are responsible should have success rather than failure in their lives?

In the event, I think it was this last, and the problems created both by and for the delinquent were considered sympathetically. The tip of the iceberg which shows itself in actual delinquency emphasising the larger submerged part which is the anti-learning and often anti-social behaviour of many pupils who do not officially become 'delinquent'.

In today's complex society, no single agency alone can tackle the problem of the potential delinquent; the solution, or amelioration, is most likely to be found in inter-disciplinary communication and action. Within the teaching profession itself, however, it would seem, from the contributions made by so many teachers at the conference, that there is a need for dissemination of information; not about the problems – there is sufficient awareness here, over-emphasised in many cases in the press – but of successful organisation or curriculum or relationships, both within and outside the school, which it is felt have made a positive contribution to the prevention of the growth of delinquent or predelinquent attitudes.

I believe too many teachers are too modest and do not write about or describe sufficiently the successes they have achieved, by themselves or in colalboration with other agencies, with parents, or with the wider community. A little more blowing of trumpets by teachers and a little less

painting of the blackest side of school life by the press – however newsworthy – might enable more teachers to benefit from the tentative efforts and experiences of others. We all in society share the responsibility for the problem; we all need to share in the positive steps which are being taken to solve it.